



December 2014

THE COURIER

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Va.



USNS Comfort Exercise

— Pages 6–7

Pain ECHO Telementoring

First Program in Navy Medicine Launches at NMCP

STORY AND PHOTOS BY REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

Specialists in pain medicine at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth officially took the reins of a telementoring project called “Pain ECHO” on Nov. 18, which brings primary care providers from different areas together to collaborate on treatment plans for patients with complex, chronic pain.

ECHO, or Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes, uses telehealth technology to bring primary care providers throughout the Navy Medicine East region face to face with the team of pain specialists for a multidisciplinary consultation.

The providers can be from clinics at NMCP, such as the Family Medicine or Internal Medicine clinics, from NMCP’s branch health clinics throughout Hampton Roads, or from any medical treatment facility within NME, which includes 18 MTFs from Texas to Bahrain.

During the Pain ECHO clinic, providers present cases of patients who need additional treatment to help manage their pain. The goal is to help primary care teams develop the treatment plans in the primary care setting, reduce referrals to the pain clinic and standardize comprehensive pain care. Recommendations for treatment come from pain psycholo-



Cmdr. Anthony Tucker, ECHO program lead, listens to the presentation of a case as Cmdr. Mathew Loe, program manager for Comprehensive Pain Management at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, evaluates the administration of the clinic.

gists, pharmacists, physical therapists, addiction specialists and

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Photo courtesy Lt. Cmdr. Mark Edwards

Thanksgiving Baskets

Members of the Diversity Committee with one of the six Thanksgiving food baskets donated to Park View Elementary School Nov. 24 to help a few families in need have a bountiful Thanksgiving. The baskets included several items, such as turkeys, stuffing, cranberries and potatoes.

From left, Gwendolyn Watkins, the school’s principal, Lt. Cmdr. Mark Edwards, MM1 Jonathan Soto, Cmdr. Maria Norbeck and HM1 Ann-Marie Rippentrop.

Save the Date

Right Weigh Program

Are you looking to be the best "You" for the New Year? Then join the four-week Right Weigh program. This healthy lifestyle program will teach all the things necessary to shed those holiday pounds and to give the tools for achieving a healthy weight. Registration is free and open to contractors, retirees, active duty, and government employees. For more information, contact HM3 Jonathan Chandler at (757) 953-1925 or Jonathan.Chandler@med.navy.mil or HM3 Mary Sigler at (757) 953-1927 or Mary.Sigler@med.navy.mil. Classes are Jan. 21, 28 and Feb. 4, 11 from 4 – 5 p.m. in the nutrition classroom in Bldg. 2 on the second floor near the Immunizations Clinic.

Upcoming Fleet and Family Support Center Workshops

Fleet and Family Support Center at NMCP is located in Bldg. 249 next to the Child Wait Center. Workshops are open to active duty, retirees, dependents and DoD civilians. Child care is available if arranged in advance. Call 953-7801 or email amanda.burba.ctr@navy.mil to register.

Couples Workshop

Couples Workshop is Jan. 14 and 21 from 2 – 4:30 p.m. This New Year, resolve to have a healthy relationship! Do you have trouble communicating with your partner? Do you find yourselves arguing a lot? This two-session workshop will help you improve your day-to-day communication, learn how to fight fair, problem solve, and strengthen your relationship.

Developing Your Spending Plan

Developing Your Spending Plan is Jan. 20 from 10 – 11:30 a.m. Do you want to get control of your financial life? This workshop can help you develop a realistic spending plan. With this spending plan in

place, you'll be on your way to paying your bills on time and achieving your short and long-term financial goals.

Parenting in a Military Family

Parenting in a Military Family on Jan. 20 and 27 from 1 – 3:30 p.m. Explore what it means to discipline children and the ways it can be accomplished most effectively. The two-session training includes strategies for encouraging children to behave appropriately, communicating in ways that really work, and increasing cooperation. Participants discuss attention-seeking behaviors and how parents can best respond to them. Additional topics include child development, temperament, expecting and giving respect, and the impact that a military lifestyle has on children.

Building Effective Anger Management Skills

Building Effective Anger Management Skills is Feb. 2 – 13 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) from 9 – 11 a.m. Do you find your anger racing from zero to 60 at work or at home? BEAMS is a multi-session, skill-building program for adults hoping to change their anger patterns. The BEAMS course is designed to prevent anger from escalating to violence. Participants learn to develop new and effective coping strategies.

Oakleaf Club Open to New Members

The Oakleaf Club of Tidewater is open to Medical, Dental, Nurse and Medical Service Corps active and retired officers and their spouses in Hampton Roads. The club is a charitable organization benefiting the Hampton Roads naval medical community. We are happy to welcome new members.

For membership information, email tidewater.oakleaf@gmail.com.

THE COURIER

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Submissions should be in Word format, with photos submitted separately from the document and in jpeg or tiff format.

The Public Affairs Office is located in Bldg. 1, 3rd Deck, Rm. C308.

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Branch Health Clinic Norfolk: DUI from 'Start to Finish'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LT. CHRISTOPHER LUFT
Branch Health Clinic Naval Station Norfolk

In anticipation of the upcoming holidays and the parties that accompany them, Branch Health Clinic Norfolk held a demonstration on the effects of drinking and driving on Nov. 7 for staff and visitors.

The demonstration was a series of interactive activities simulating the "start to finish" process of a drunk driving arrest. At the initial stage, the "beer-goggle" demonstration had volunteers maneuvering around a small track on tricycles, simulating how hard it is to drive intoxicated. A Listerine rinse was provided before taking a breathalyzer test, which caused the person to blow above the legal limit of 0.08 percent blood alcohol concentration.

Once found guilty of drunk driving, a series of stations illustrated the legalities involved, the hidden costs of a DUI, and a summary of the process of being prosecuted. The final stop was a "court martial" station where punishments and repercussions at the state and military levels were summarized. Participants were made aware of the punishments, burdens, and long-term damage a single DUI can bring. Pamphlets were available illustrating the enormous financial burden driving under the influence can bring.

Local police, senior officers, senior enlisted members and JAG officers were present to help push the message across. Props were set up around the event to illustrate the severity of car crashes that can occur when someone drives under the influence. Mannequins and actors were dressed up with fake blood, cuts, and scrapes to make the situation seem real.

The event was run by Peg Smith and Mark Ware who came up with the idea of this event to combat the problem of driving while impaired. They wanted to focus attention on how big a problem drinking and driving is. There was a great turnout as



Tricycles set up as a demonstration with "drunken goggles" simulating the difficulties of maneuvering while driving drunk.

participants and volunteers helped to support this cause to educate others on the severity of drinking and driving.

The message is simple: "You drink, you drive, you lose."

Tricycles set up as a demonstration with "drunken-goggles" simulating the difficulties of maneuvering while driving drunk.

Work sheets were created to teach participants about the specific legislature on drinking and driving. Each workshop also displayed the monetary cost of drinking and driving.

Pamphlets were created and handed out informing participants of the monetary, physical, emotional, and social cost of drinking and driving.

Did you know...

Nearly one fourth of all fatal automobile accidents are caused by drunk drivers.

An average of 28 people die every day as a result of drunk driving in the U.S.

A drunk driver will drive drunk nearly 80 times before their first arrest.



Work sheets were created to teach participants about the specific legislature on drinking and driving. Each workshop also displayed the monetary cost of drinking and driving.



Pamphlets were created and handed out informing participants of the monetary, physical, emotional, and social cost of drinking and driving.

The Party Was 'Icy,' But That's OK

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MC₂ (SW) TERAH L. BRYANT
NMCP Public Affairs

Celebrating the 13th annual Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Clinic's Christmas party Dec. 12, patients of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth had a few surprises waiting for them, including story time and singing from Elsa and Anna of the movie "Frozen," as well as a special visit from Santa Claus.

Members of the Oakleaf Club spouses group welcomed families and patients, serving them an assortment of food. Pediatric Hematology/Oncology staff offered warm smiles and the promise of a fun-filled afternoon.

The party gives chronically ill children and their families a fun and exciting afternoon during the holidays with others who understand the challenges of what they are going through, something the children don't often have the opportunity to do.

After enjoying the meal, families celebrated the lives of current and former patients by placing gold, silver and red ribbons on the Christmas tree. They began by honoring the children who died.

"I would like to honor some of our young people who didn't survive their battle," said Cmdr. Coleman Bryan. "By placing this large gold ribbon on the tree, we recognize all the children



Jacob Babonis, with the assistance of his father, places his red ribbon on the tree.

worldwide who have lost their battle to cancer."

Everyone took a moment to remember the children as their family members came forward to place a small gold ribbon on the tree.

"The red ribbon is to honor all of our current and past patients who are here with us today, whom are currently undergoing treatment or have won their battle with cancer," Bryan said.

Brothers and sisters of the patients were given little silver bows to place on the tree.

"You're the ones who, at two in the morning, get stuck in the waiting area, and we want to show our appreciation to you, too," Bryan said.

After the annual tree decorating, patients were eagerly anticipating the afternoon's entertainment to arrive.

— See ICY, next page



Lanna, left, and Lt. Shannon Vestal, right, join their children Quinn and Kaleb, 7, to share a moment with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Elsa of the movie "Frozen" shows off her icy powers, turning water into snow, as "Anna" talks about her powers.



Specialists in pain medicine gather for the first independent Navy Pain ECHO Clinic at NMCP on Nov. 18.

The specialists reviewed and offered expert guidance for two complex pain management cases.

ECHO — *Continued from Page 1*
pain medicine specialists.

The Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery started the rollout of ECHO for pain medicine in April. The rollout was assisted by staff at the University of New Mexico, where the concept was developed about a decade ago. Specialists at NMCP are now able to conduct Pain ECHO clinics independently from the university staff, a first within Navy Medicine.



Lt. Lindsay Gleason, a clinical psychologist at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fla., presents her case to specialists in pain medicine at NMCP Nov. 18.

“Today, the team is moving from a role of being mentored and guided in the processes to actually standing up an independent team,” said Cmdr. Mathew Loe, program manager for Comprehensive Pain Management at BUMED. “Our goal is to augment the quality components of care that are provided to our chronic pain patients. We have the capability to do five to six clinics per month, and focus on subspecialties within pain management or a different specialty altogether, from hepatitis to dermatology.”

Lt. Lindsay Gleason, a clinical psychologist at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, was the first provider to present a case during the Nov. 18 clinic.

“The pain clinic is very valuable in that a provider is able to get different perspectives and treatment recommendations from providers and clinicians from various specialties,” Gleason said. “It allows a provider to develop the capacity and skills of these providers to more confidently treat their chronic pain patients. The clinic incorporates a didactic which facilitates learning and allows us to increase capability to handle chronic and complex cases.”

“There are many treatment options that may not be known to the primary care team,” said Cmdr. Anthony Tucker, the Navy Medicine East lead for the program and a pain medicine specialist. “We are able to better coordinate care and increase the efficiency of care.”

ICY — *Continued from previous page*

“We have some special guests who you may recognize, but I’ll let y’all figure out who is it,” said Bryan, teasing the patients moments before live versions of the animated characters Anna and Elsa appeared.

The children were starstruck as the sisters shared their story, demonstrated a bit of Elsa’s ice powers and, of course, sang a few songs.

The party was a success, according to Lt. Shannon Vestal,

as he watched his 7-year-old son run around and have a fun, carefree afternoon.

“This is a good opportunity for him to relate with the other kids,” Vestal said. “He doesn’t get the same thing at school.”

Each child could relate to the excitement of the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus. More than two dozen patients and their siblings lined up to sit on Santa’s lap, receive a special present, and smile for a photo.

USNS Comfort Exercise: Fake Injuries, Realistic Response

By MC₂ (SW) TERAH L. BRYANT
 NMCP Public Affairs

The patients were alive and the injuries were simulated as doctors, nurses and corpsmen participated in a mass casualty drill Dec. 11, on board the hospital ship USNS Comfort.

The medical personnel have been assigned to the Continuing Promise 2015 humanitarian mission that begins in the spring. During the drill, they were exposed to a new level of realism as the “patients” wore surgical “cut suits” to mimic the look, feel and smell of severe trauma injuries. The prostheses allow physicians to safely perform realistic procedures on the patients.

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth’s Healthcare Simulation Center coordinated the simulation aspect of the drill, bringing the cut suits on board, as well as high-fidelity mannequins that can be programmed to move, speak and respond to health care providers.

“The overall goal of the mass casualty was to provide realistic trauma during the exercise that would allow us to test USNS Comfort’s medical systems and patient management capabilities, as well as build confidence and teamwork among the crew,” said Cmdr. Michael Spooner, director of the Simulation Center.

Medical personnel from NMCP and other East Coast medical treatment facilities trained Dec. 8 – 12 during the sixth COMFEX, or Comfort Exercise, in anticipation of being called to provide support to service members on the battlefield or responding to a medical disaster, as well as continuing to prepare for upcoming humanitarian missions.

The health care providers come to the ship skilled and ready to care for patients, but must learn the procedures shipboard procedures, such as transferring patients between units, ordering laboratory tests and the location of medical supplies.

This COMFEX was the sixth time that more than 200 doctors, nurses and came together to practice caring for simulated patients. When the Comfort is assigned a mission, this “critical core” team stocks and prepares the medical spaces while the



Photos by MC1 (SW/EXW/AW) Gary Johnson

Casualty Receiving staff treat a simulated patient during the helicopter crash scenario aboard USNS Comfort.

ship is pierside, and trains the rest of the medical crew in the ship’s procedures as it steams towards its destination.

This drill again focused on assessing patients and establishing treatment, but added the ability to “operate” on simulated patients who wore the cut suits. According to Spooner, the mannequins and cut suits are the best way to test the shipboard procedures, and allows personnel to self-assess and improve their knowledge of those procedures before the real patients come on board.

The scenario – 20 patients from a helicopter crash – included treating multiple amputations, hypothermia, extensive burns, cardiac arrest and performing abdominal surgery. Patients were first transported to Casualty Receiving, where they were assessed and treated, and then transferred to the Intensive Care Unit or operating room for additional care.

The stress-filled scenario tested critical surgical and patient triage capabilities, stress and emotional sensitivity of the crew and intensive care management capabilities, ensuring the group can work as a cohesive unit.

“They placed us in more of a live situation instead of

— See COMFORT, next page



Intensive Care Unit staff administer CPR to a simulated patient during the mass casualty drill.



Operating room staff transfer a simulated patient to the operating table aboard USNS Comfort.

The simulated patient wears a surgical cut suit that allows surgeons and OR staff to experience the look, feel and smell of severe trauma injuries. The prostheses allow surgeons to safely perform realistic procedures on patients.

COMFORT — *Continued from previous page* walking us through it, and we are performing well," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class LaShaunda Guy. "I feel like there has been an improvement in our processes since our last COMFEX."

Air Force Maj. Jeremy Garlick praised the exceptional prioritization of patients and working the scenario with limited resources.

"Everyone did a good job," Garlick said. "We are learning each other's strengths, which will help us further focus what we're doing."

Guy feels the critical core team is essential to the smooth running of the mission, and the COMFEX training with the fulltime shipboard staff is critical.

"I think we all bring our expertise, knowledge and skills to

the table," Guy said. "They get to see it from our side, and we get to teach each other."

Capt. Rachel Haltner, commanding officer of Comfort's medical treatment facility, noted that the team needs to keep pushing forward as they prepare for the mission to Central and South America and the Caribbean.

"We are learning to get rid of the white noise (distractions)," Haltner said. "We are building our team up, and I am very proud of everyone."

During Continuing Promise 2015, Comfort along with the embarked medical staff is scheduled to visit Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Colombia, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Haiti, and provide medical care to thousands of patients.



Staff assigned to the Directorate for Nursing Services aboard USNS Comfort gather in the Intensive Care Unit before the drill begins.

Manpower and Detailing Briefs Give Corpsmen the Inside Scoop

By MC1 (SW/EXW/AW) GARY JOHNSON
NMCP Public Affairs

Program coordinators from the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth CPO 365 program sponsored a brief with senior leaders from the offices of Personnel Readiness (PERS-4013) and BUPERS Assignments (PERS-407) for the corpsman rating Nov. 21.

The briefs were incorporated into CPO 365 training program to educate the command's first class and chief petty officers on manpower issues and detailing procedures within the community.

Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW/FMF) Claude Copeland, a rating specialist from Personnel Readiness, how they select billets to be advertised on Career Management System - Interactive Detailing, or CMS-ID.

"We are focused on the readiness of the Navy and ensuring that our priority billets are advertised to be filled each month," Copeland said. "We select the billets available each month by looking at the priority of billets that we have open based on input from the command and type commanders. The number advertised is determined by an algorithm based on the number of people we have in their window each month."

Copeland also said that more corpsmen are being screened and selected to attend "C" school directly after graduation from "A" School to supplement the lower number of applicants from the fleet.

HMCN (SW/AW) Chuck Hickey, PERS-407 lead detailer, spoke about the manning of the rate and the detailer's role. He included information about a 6.5 percent reduction in the manning levels of the rate.



MCS (MDV/SCW) David Walker, a detailer for corpsmen with a Navy Enlisted Classification, right, listens to a question from HM1 (SW/AW) Sonia Strickland.

"The Hospital Corps as a whole is currently overmanned and, in the next two years, we are going to ask about 1,700 Sailors to go home," Hickey said. "It is important that people understand that part of our job is to advocate for them and their career progression. We are the people who distribute, assign and put the right people in the right job in our community of 26,000 hospital corpsmen."



Photos by MC1 (SW/AW) Abraham Essenmacher

HMCN (SW/AW/FMF) Claude Copeland talks about the difference between the Personnel Readiness and BUPERS Assignments offices.

Hickey also mentioned that many Navy Enlisted Classifications within the corpsman rate are shore duty-centric, and that Sailors should be focused on taking career-enhancing billets over billets based solely on their geographic location.

The corpsman detailing process is split into two main groups based on whether they are general duty corpsmen or they have a specific NEC. There are also detailers for the different pay grades within those groups.

Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (MDV/SCW) David Walker, a detailer for corpsmen who have an NEC, spoke about the detailing process and how Sailors should be using CMS-ID when they are preparing to apply for orders.

"When a Sailor is in their window to apply for orders, they should be putting in their preference for five sets of orders on CMS every month until they are selected for a billet," Walker said. "If that person chooses less than five, we will make the remaining choices for them based on their records. Sailors should file a 1306 for any special considerations that they want the detailers to take into consideration between 13 and 11 months before their rotation date. Some examples of reasons would be spousal co-location or returning from an Individual Augmentee assignment."

Walker said that if a Sailor has not chosen or has not been selected for orders by six months before their rotation date, they

— See **DETAILER**, previous page

Well Women: NMCP, Oak Hill Join Forces to Increase Ship's Medical Readiness

By MCC (SW/AW) LESLIE L. TOMAINO
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Women's Health Clinic partnered with medical staff on board USS Oak Hill to provide a half-day, well-woman clinic to ensure the medical readiness of more than 25 female Sailors in advance of their upcoming deployment.

Air Force Capt. Christine Rojas, an obstetrician-gynecologist, and Cmdr. Amy Wootten, a nurse midwife, teamed up with the ship's medical staff to streamline required care to the crew. The joint-service effort helped get the job done quickly.

In less than four hours, the clinic improved the readiness level of female Sailors from 72 percent to 100 percent. The idea for the clinic came from Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jennifer Lewis, a recent addition to the Oak Hill crew who had previously been assigned to NMCP. She recognized the need for a helping hand, and reached out to Wootten.

"They were thrilled to have female medical officers aboard to assist with well-woman exams," Wootten said. "We were warmly received by the crew. Coordinating setup and supplies with HM3 Lewis in advance allowed us to come right aboard and get started."

With the ship pierside at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, patients could either schedule an appointment or walk in, which eliminated the time to travel to and from the clinic at the Portsmouth medical center. The patients also reduced the time away from their work centers.

"The experience on the Oak Hill was rewarding, and I enjoyed working alongside the Navy and learning more

about their mission," Rojas said. "It was my first time on a Navy ship, since it's rare for Air Force physicians to go on board them. The ability to provide medical care to military women on board is a huge benefit, allowing them to be seen expeditiously rather than traveling to another base for care."

Wootten praised Lewis for developing the plan to bring the ship another step closer to medical readiness prior to deployment.

"Big kudos to HM3 Lewis for identifying the problem and thinking outside the box to make her ship compliant with standards and operational requirements," Wootten said. "Another big thanks to the commanding officer and senior medical officer – they were fantastic about letting us come on board, and fully trusted HM3 to coordinate. This speaks volumes to her leadership and managerial skills."

Oak Hill is slated to deploy in early 2015 and the ship will be mission ready, thanks to the joint efforts of the medical staff and NMCP's Women's Health Clinic.

DETAILER — *Continued from previous page*
 will be assigned orders based on needs of the Navy.

For many Sailors at NMCP, the brief provided new information and for others, it was a refresher. Many of the staff who attended have junior Sailors who work for them, and they were encouraged to share as much of the information as possible.

"There are a lot of beneficial things I learned today that I can teach my Sailors that will help them advance and help them stay in the Navy," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW) Jenny Landaeta, Ambulatory Surgery Center leading petty officer. "I think one of the biggest things to take away is the timeline in which everything has to be done. This type of event would be an incredible thing to repeat yearly or more often, if possible."



Photos courtesy of Cmdr. Amy Wootten

Air Force Capt. Christine Rojas, Lt. Benjamin P. Hall, USS Oak Hill's senior medical officer, and Cmdr. Amy Wootten on the deck of USS Oak Hill.

Santa, Motorcyclists Bring Operation Bright Light to NMCP

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MC_I (SW/AW)
ABRAHAM ESSENMACHER
NMCP Public Affairs

Santa led a contingent of motorcycle clubs to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth on Sunday, Dec. 14, for the annual Operation Bright Light, providing service members' children and patients some holiday cheer and presents.

Members of Rolling Thunder Chapter 5, Legend Riders Post 2, Azreals Liberty Chapter, Buffalo Soldiers, Sons of Dominion, War Eagles, Sons of Poseidon Motorcycle Group and Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association chapters 1 and 3 vroomed onto the grounds with hundreds of festively wrapped packages in tow.

The event was coordinated by NMCP's Red Cross and members of the First Class Petty Officers Association. In all, nearly 400 presents were delivered by Santa and the 64 bikers who helped make this event happen. Many of the bikers return year after year for the annual event, with the

intent of making service members' kids in the hospital a little happier. The gift giving began in NMCP's emergency room and continued to other departments before finishing in the pediatrics ward.

"It's such unexpected diversion from their stay in a hospital. It cuts through the tension of having to be here, to bring some joy and some fun by being a kid again," said Chris Brogan, Child-Life Specialist. "It brings a break from any pain or fear of what's going on."

"Every member in our organization feels, from the bottom of their heart, that this is a small thing that we can do to bring a smile to the faces of these kids," said Roy Manoley Jr., president of the Rolling Thunder Chapter 5 club.

Manoley first started coming to the hospital to deliver presents eight years ago and remembers the first experience he had.

"I gave a child a toy and when I saw that child's face light up, along with the parents,



Taylor West, 3, receives an early Christmas gift from Santa in the waiting area of NMCP's emergency room. Santa was accompanied by local motorcycle clubs helping to provide some extra holiday cheer.

it brought tears to my eyes."

"It brings cheer and a feeling of 'we're not in this by ourselves' to the patients here and I think they got a brief moment away from whatever it is that has brought them here," said LaFrancis Francis, of NMCP's Red Cross station.

Children's eyes grew wide as Santa ho-ho-ho'ed in their room and

— See SANTA, next page



Members of motorcycle clubs Rolling Thunder Chapter 5, Legend Riders Post 2, Azreals Liberty Chapter, Buffalo Soldiers, Sons of Dominion, War Eagles, Sons of Poseidon Motorcycle Group and Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association chapters 1 and 3, gathered with staff in front of NMCP's Bldg. 1 before delivering presents to our youngest patients.



Santa Claus gives Phoenix, 6, and Devin, 2, some gifts to enjoy during their visit to NMCP's emergency room.



Taylor Roberts, 14, receives a marshmallow blaster from one of Santa's helpers and a visit from Santa during Operation Bright Light.

SANTA — *Continued from previous page*

by their sides. With a twinkle in his eye he spoke to the kids, gave them a present and wished them well.

"It was also good for the parents to be able to see their child smile, which may not have been something that child has been doing today or during their stay at the hospital," said Francis.

"They do a great job coming each year and supporting the Red Cross and their mission here at our hospital," said Brogan. "It's a fantastic mission that they're doing – helping touch the lives of our patients and the families is spectacular.

"It's important for the community be involved with our patients and families because I think many have a lot of empathy for our ser-



Burkleigh Griggs, 2, receives a doll from Santa Claus in her room in the Pediatrics Ward.



Santa gives a present to a patient in the emergency room as the patient's mother takes a photo. The emergency room was the first stop for Santa during operation Bright Light.

vice members and their families but they may not know how they can help, so this is one great way they can do that," Brogan added.

Some of the toys that were delivered will be saved and distributed to future pediatric patients. Operation Bright Light takes place twice a year. In addition to the December event, the motorcycle clubs visit during the summer with Santa for "Christmas in July" for the kids.

Manoley hinted that the local chapters, which are largely composed of prior service members, is planning something special for next summer's visit.

After Santa visited all the children, the FCPOA treated the motorcyclists and volunteers to sandwiches and refreshments in the galley.



Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox speak about lessons learned over the years, specifically his experience in New Orleans nine years ago following Hurricane Katrina.

World-Renowned Surgeon Visits NMCP, Addresses Staff on Disaster Response and Humanitarian Mission

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
REBECCA A. PERRON
NMCP Public Affairs

One of the most recognized surgeons in America and around the world addressed Naval Medical Center Portsmouth staff Dec. 12, sharing his expertise in medical disaster response during the medical center's monthly Grand Rounds lecture.

More than 100 doctors and nurses listened to cardiothoracic vascular surgeon Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox speak about lessons learned over the years, specifically his experience in New Orleans nine years ago following Hurricane Katrina. The topic is important to NMCP health care providers, as they deploy on board USNS Comfort when the hospital ship responds to mass casualties and provides humanitarian assistance, including the Continuing Promise 2015 mission to Central and South America.

Mattox's goal was to help them better understand how their skills fit into a disaster relief mission, the challenges they will encounter, and what to expect. He was at NMCP as part of the Comfort Lecture Series, which coincided with his visit to the Comfort to observe the medical disaster response exercise.

"The disasters that you will be involved with will be categorized as mass casualties," Mattox said. "Each response has a different timeline and each will require a different reaction on your part. But consistently, we've found that of those involved in the disaster, 10 percent will need immediate care.

"About 10 percent of the injured will be in critical condition and 10 percent of them will need an immediate operation," he said. "That comes down to one percent of the injured will need that immediate urgent care, and it will be your job to find those people."

Mattox talked about the classifications of disasters and how civil authorities,

pens immediately – via triage, caring for all the injured and protecting the assets that you have to care for them.

"In this last year, the most common threat that hit public facilities is the active shooter," Mattox said. "Viral infections, particularly Ebola, are also challenging, not only for the federal government, CDC and state health departments, but also for individual hospitals."

Capt. Rachel Haltner, the commanding officer of the Comfort's medical treatment facility, also spoke to the audience, relating elements of Mattox's lecture to aspects of providing care during Continuing Promise 2015 and other medical response situations.

"Think about leadership challenges that come with wearing the uniform," Haltner said. "You are the one who is called upon in difficult times and may be the point person for the command. You have to have the courage to make the tough decisions, because you have people waiting to follow

your lead, and telling them the expectations is ultimately going to make it work."

Mattox is currently the second vice president of the American College of Surgeons. In addition to talking about

"About 10 percent of the injured will be in critical condition and 10 percent of them will need an immediate operation. That comes down to one percent of the injured will need that immediate urgent care, and it will be your job to find those people."

— Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox

public health departments and medical disaster response work together.

"The medical disaster response and everything that happens in the hospital is what challenges the most," Mattox said. "You as a surgeon, you as a nurse, as a hospital worker are looking at what hap-

— See **ROUNDS**, next page

NICU Staff Presents Carolina Panthers Gift Bag to Family

When two-month old Carolina Brown and her mother, Airman 1st Class Rebecca Brown, finished with their routine newborn checkup Dec. 5, the Neonatal Intensive Care staff had a surprise waiting – a Carolina Panthers Family Pack containing hats, t-shirts, a signed football and a personalized letter from their head coach. During Carolina's 18-day stay in the NICU in October, the staff learned the origin of her name: Carolina's dad Steven is a devoted Panthers fan.

Word found its way to the team via the Raleigh, N.C., USO. The Panthers donated the gift pack, but it arrived after Carolina was discharged, so the staff waited until her next checkup to present it.

"This is just awesome," Rebecca Brown said. "My husband is going to be so excited when he sees this."

Airman 1st Class Rebecca Brown discovers what the Carolina Panthers sent in their gift bag to the family.



Airman 1st Class Rebecca Brown accepts a gift bag from the Carolina Panthers.



Photos by MC2 (SW) Terah L. Bryant

ROUNDS — *Continued from previous page*

disasters and humanitarian response, he said it's important to match technology with local needs and capabilities.

"Three things are always local: politics, disaster response and health care delivery. Local response is always the key to success. Assistance must be organized to be effective and the local hospital must remain in charge. You must integrate with the local medical care to keep from being ineffective."

Haltner ended the lecture by talking about the preparations being made on board *Comfort* for Continuing Promise 2015.

"In four months, we are going to 11 countries on behalf of the United States, and we have to be prepared to respond to a disaster in the Southern Command area of operations," Haltner said. "There are a lot of your colleagues from NMCP and other East Coast medical commands that are on *Comfort* right now storming and forming and preparing to get underway."

Continuing Promise 2015 is scheduled to visit Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Colombia, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Haiti.



From left, Capt. Kimberly Davis, director for Surgical Services, Capt. Bradford Smith, executive officer, and Capt. Rachel Haltner, commanding officer of USNS *Comfort*'s medical treatment facility, listen to Dr. Kenneth L. Mattox during the Grand Rounds lecture Dec. 12.

Candle Lighting Service Held for Grieving Parents

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MC1 (SW/AW) ABRAHAM ESSENMACHER
NMCP Public Affairs

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth held its fifth annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Service Dec. 5, providing parents who have experienced the loss of an infant an opportunity to come together and support each other during the holidays.

The service was held in the chapel and coordinated by the command's Bereavement Team. Nearly 40 attended and a member of each family lit a candle for each child and spoke the name of their child.

"The service was designed with the intent that parents would be able to attend a service and be active participants in honoring their babies," says Sharon Evans, Bereavement Team member. "Parents grieve because they didn't get a chance to parent their babies. They had many hopes, dreams and expectations of being Mommy and Daddy to this child, so we wanted to give these parents an opportunity to parent."

While the service draws attention to sad events in the families' lives, it can also be cathartic and help parents through their grief.

"Programs and events like this are a great way to meet people who are going through the same thing and realize that we're not crazy for feeling like the way we do," said former Machinist Mate 2nd Class James Tilley, who with his wife, Caitlyn, lost their twins last January. "This is something that will never be closed for us, but this service is something that helps us deal with it and maybe even sleep better at night."

Many of the infants died due to miscarriage, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ectopic pregnancy and newborn



Parents light candles during a remembrance service in the chapel Dec. 5, in recognition of infants lost prematurely. The service included songs, individual stories and religious readings.

death. The service included stories and remarks to give consolation and hope. The somber event provided grieving parents a forum where they could talk and share their story with each other, helping to further bring closure and better understanding of these tragedies.

"It's a struggle that's hard to describe to the average person when we tell them our story because they don't fully grasp the gravity of it," said Tilley. "But being with other parents who have lost children, dealt with the pain and the suffering like we have, is comforting."

"We wanted parents to be able to honor the life of their baby, no matter the brevity, by lighting a candle for them," says Evans. "Lighting a candle has significant meaning and is associated with other candle-lighting opportunities, like lighting a candle on a birthday cake. Unless we show our parents that it's okay, parents will not know that they can light a candle or make a cake for a child who has died."

Songs of reflection were played, including "Hello, Goodbye," by Michael W. Smith, and "Tears in Heaven," by Eric Clapton, as well as a reading of Bible scriptures including Psalm 23.

Lt. Cmdr. Rita Farias, NMCP Perinatal Bereavement Team member, provided closing remarks. She shared the story of the loss of her and her husband's baby boy while they were attending college in Wisconsin through the NROTC program.

Evans encouraged parents to remember their child's life during the holidays. She suggested grieving parents could set a special place at the Christmas table for their child, release butterflies or balloons to signify that they are thinking of the child. Those "happy memories will soar up to them in heaven where they reside," she said.



Capt. Sandra Hearn, senior nursing executive, delivers opening remarks for the candle lighting remembrance service in the chapel.

NMCP Celebrates Newest Nurse Anesthesia Graduates

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MC2 (SW) TERAH L. BRYANT
NMCP Public Affairs

The Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences welcomed two of the newest graduates of the Nurse Anesthesia Program Class of 2014 at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Dec. 8.

Lt. Katherine Kidde and Lt. Meredith Tverdosi completed the 30-month program and received training from staff and instructors at Sentara Norfolk General, Sentara Hampton Careplex, U.S. Air Force Hospital Langley, Langley Air Force Base, VA Medical Center Asheville, N.C., and NMCP.

Cmdr. Justice Parrott, the ceremony's guest speaker, congratulated Kidde and Tverdosi on completion of the program and described their job with an analogy.

"Anesthesia is like a buffet; you are given a facet to choose from, lots of little nuggets you can learn from and this overwhelming sense of knowledge on which way you can go," said Parrott. "Like a buffet, when you are five you hold your plate out and you want some of this and some of that, I want all of it. As you work your way through, obtaining more knowledge

and skill, you learn what you like and can pick your own plate, pick what you want."

Lt. Cmdr. Jerrol Wallace talked about watching them go from students to colleagues.

"We are proud to call them our colleagues and fellow nurse anesthetists. Our small community will be enriched by your knowledge," said Wallace.

President of the Uniformed Services University Charles Rice noted how grateful he was for the NMCP staff working with the anesthesia program.

"Thank you for your strong support here," said Rice. "We are enormously proud of what our students have learned here and are confident of the work they will perform."

Rice and Parrott presented Kidde and Tverdosi with their graduation certificates and surprised them with a gift from staff: new, personalized laboratory coats.

Kidde and Tverdosi presented outstanding instructor awards to Ed Hanahan and Lt. Cmdr. Jose Mercado.

"We are so grateful to the staff here at the hospital for molding us into the anesthetists that we are," said Kidde. "We do take a bit from everyone we work with, so the people we will be is going to be a combination of everyone we have worked with over the last 30 months."

Parrott ended his speech by challenging the graduates to now "serve the buffet," and added that it's now time for them to teach their knowledge by passing it on to the next students.



Cmdr. Justice Parrott and Charles Rice present Lt. Cmdr. Katherine Kidde with her graduation certificate.



Cmdr. Justice Parrott and Charles Rice present Lt. Meredith Tverdosi with her graduation certificate.



January is National Blood Donor Month

Some give blood because they were asked by a friend.
 Some know a family member or friend might need blood some day.
 Some believe it is the right thing to do.

What's your reason?

**Call (757) 953-1717
 to make an appointment.**

Oakleaf Club Spreads Joy with Christmas Trees

The Oakleaf Club of Tidewater spread some of their Christmas spirit by assembling and decorating trees around NMCP Dec. 3. They put trees by the main elevators on both the first and second floor of Bldg. 2.

They also put a tree in Bldg. 1, just outside the command suite offices. The tree on the first floor of Bldg. 2 is blue and gold themed, while the second floor tree is a patriotic red, white and blue theme. The tree in Bldg. 1 is a vintage-themed tree with candle-styled lights. Both patients and staff that walked by during the setup were impressed and happy to see the great work being done to help raise everyone's spirits.



Members of the Oakleaf Club pose with the finished tree by the main elevators of Bldg. 2 on the second floor.

The finished tree by the main elevator of Bldg. 2 on the first floor.



Photos by MC1 (SW/EXW/AW) Gary Johnson

Sarah Larson decorates the tree on the first floor of Bldg. 2.



Oakleaf Club members put the finishing touches on the tree in front of the Command Suite offices in Bldg. 1.



Spouse Club Decorates Pediatrics Ward

Members of the Hampton Roads Civil Engineer Corps Officers' Spouses' Club delivered some Christmas cheer to the NMCP Pediatric Ward Dec. 2. The group decorated the ward with a gingerbread man theme and made a donation to help buy items to boost the morale of patients and their families. The event has become a yearly tradition between the club and NMCP.

"We just want to help lift the spirits of all the kids that come through here," said Elisha Matvay, the club's president. "A lot of them are having a really hard time, and it can be a difficult time for children to be in the hospital during the holidays. Anything we can do to help put a smile on their face is definitely a rewarding experience."



Lori LaPlatney, left, and Elisha Matvay hang decorations on a window in the Pediatrics Ward.



Members of the Hampton Roads Civil Engineer Officers' Spouses' Club hang decorations on a nursing station in the NMCP Pediatric Ward.



Members of the Hampton Roads Civil Engineer Corps Officers' Spouses' Club present a donation for the 2014 holidays after decorating the NMCP Pediatrics Ward.



Photos by MC1 (SW/EXW/AW) Gary Johnson



Mary Butrym, left, and Vickie Cariello put decorations on the wall of the Pediatrics Ward.

Left: Capt. Bradford Smith, NMCP executive officer, left, thanks members of the spouses' club while they hang decorations.

Civilians of the Quarter



Natarsha Webb
Category I Administrative

As the medical support technician supervisor, Natarsha Webb meticulously managed the daily operations of the Radiology Department Scheduling Center. Her leadership and management skills resulted in more than 6,000 answered calls monthly; she was able to schedule appointments for more than 4,000 patients in Tidewater, directly supporting NMCP's commitment to excellence in customer service. Additionally, she served as the liaison for the Veterans Affairs mammography patients, providing meticulous attention in scheduling and arranging base access. Her outstanding medical support of the Radiology Department and the thousands NMCP's beneficiaries is a true testimony of her commitment to the mission of NMCP.



Christopher Jones
Category II Administrative

As the head of the Industrial Hygiene Department, Christopher Jones provided extraordinary leadership and the ability to adapt, innovate and consistently meet all requirements, no matter what the challenge. His vast knowledge of the field allowed him to communicate and create robust educational offerings, containing six hours of training per quarter per hygienist at no cost to the command. He meticulously led his department and passed the Safety Occupational Health Medicine Examination receiving praise from Navy Medicine East. He lectured frequently at military and non-governmental facilities on occupational safety and health issues, and he is part of the Old Dominion University Environmental Health Advisory Council.



Colette Womack
Category II Clinical

As the code blue coordinator and patient safety representative of the Internal Medicine Clinic, Colette Womack personally supervised and managed critical situations with an unwavering manner and attention to detail. Her vast knowledge of template management resulted in a 15 percent increase in patient access. Her charismatic approach allowed her to communicate new ideas effectively to the staff and patients which improved the overall atmosphere of the clinic. Through her outstanding organization skills, she flawlessly maintained the routine schedule of more than 150 patients during manning shortages.

AWARDS

NAVY & MARINE CORPS COMMENDATION MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. William E. Burns
Lt. Cmdr. James Emrick
Lt. Cmdr. Lydia B. Haase
Lt. Cmdr. Craig Malloy
Lt. Cmdr. Victor Rivera
HMC Kevin M. Robinson

NAVY & MARINE CORPS ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

Lt. Cmdr. Kasina Blevins
Lt. Cmdr. Timothy A. Platz
Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Ruane
Lt. j. g. Juliana Gutierrez

HM1 Joy Chipim Marquez
BM2 (SW) Emeka Igwe
HM2 (AW) John Lemke
HM2 (SW) Stella Myers
MM2 Melinda Tober
IT2 Christina Turnage
HM2 Travis D. Winston
HM3 Joaopaulo Lima
HM3 Brandon Littlejohn
HM3 Kionna Watson

NAVY MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD

Marjorie A. Wilkerson



Photo by MC1 (SW/AW) Abraham Essenmacher

The monthly command award ceremony Dec. 8 recognized 30 staff, who received their award from Capt. Darin Via, NMCP commanding officer, and HMCM (EXW/FMF/SW) Aaron Vandall, acting command master chief. The awards presented included one Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, 17 Good Conduct Medals, one Certificate of Commendation, three Letters of Commendation and five Command Pillar awards.



USFF Band Plays Boone Clinic

The Fleet Forces Band played Dec. 18 at Vice Admiral Joel T. Boone Branch Health Clinic at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story. Staff and patients enjoyed the music, which put them in a happy mood for the holidays. Thank you, Fleet Forces Band!

SHIPMATE OF THE MONTH



Photo by MC1 (SW/AW) Abraham Essenmacher

MC2 TERAH BRYANT, COMMAND SUITE
HN CATHERINE CARO, DCSS
HN PHYLICIA CASTILLO, DNS
HR JUSTIN DICKEY, DMS
AC2 COURTNEY FILCHNER, DFA

HN JOSHUA FLAKE, DPC
HN SYDNEY GREENE, DPHS
HN SHEENA PHELPS, DSS
HN3 DAVID RATCLIFF, DMH
HM2 DANNY SPIKER JR., DPE

MENTOR OF THE MONTH

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW) Shayla R. Robertson has worked at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth since June 2013 and is the leading petty officer for the Directorate of Mental Health.

She takes care of all administrative responsibilities for the inpatient and outpatient departments within the directorate, including the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program, and ensures her

Sailors are well informed.

"I am responsible for my Sailors well-being," Robertson said. "They need to know they are in a working environment where they are going to be taken care of by the leadership."

While taking care of her Sailors, Robertson previously co-chaired the Mentorship Program with HMCM (SW) Marsha Burmeister and led several speed mentoring sessions, also putting together other opportunities for protégés and mentors to come together.

As a mentor herself, she has two Sailors she officially mentors, and mentors other junior Sailors every chance she can.

Robertson believes the program is beneficial because she believes everyone needs guidance.

"With the program, it helps give direction for the mentors and protégés," Robertson said. "Why hold onto the information that has provided you the

chance to get you to your ultimate goal? Share that knowledge and help others become successful as well!"

She became a mentor because she loves helping people, and seeing them succeed is exactly what motivates Robertson.

"I'm passionate about helping others succeed to where they want to go or who they want to become," Robertson said.

Robertson believes that becoming a good mentor does not happen overnight, but positive characteristics that will help along the way are patience, honesty, being able to communicate effectively, and accountability.



Photo by MC1 (SW/AW) Abraham Essenmacher

Would you like to become a mentor or find a mentor? Check out the Mentor Program on the Intranet to find valuable information about mentoring at NMCP. Go to the directory website map and look under "M" to learn more and join the Mentor Program today. Everyone is welcome.